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By *MN* NARA Date *11/19/94*

Department of State

TELEGRAM  
ACTION COPY

## NODIS REVIEW

Cat. A - Caption removed;  
transferred to O/FADRC  
Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC  
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with additional access  
controlled by S/S  
Caption and custody  
retained by S/S  
Reviewed by *Jan Bragg*  
Date: *9 Oct 1971*

NODIS REVIEW CONTROL : 91 Q  
RECEIVED : Jan. 3, 1971  
0456Z

Cat. A - Caption removed;  
transferred to O/FADRC  
Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC  
with additional access  
controlled by S/S  
Cat. C - Caption and custody  
retained by S/S

Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Witman, II  
Date: *6/18/76*

SUBJECT: ILLNESS OF PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA

REF: STATE 207

1. PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA CAME TO MY HOUSE LATE TONIGHT (JANUARY 2) DIRECTLY FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PALACE. HE SAID THAT AFTER HEARING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN DOCTORS, ALL OF THE DOCTORS HAD FULLY ACCEPTED THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND AGREED THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD GO ABROAD FOR FURTHER TESTING AND TREATMENT, PREFERABLY IN THE UNITED STATES. AS A RESULT, NOUIRA SAID THE PRESIDENT AND HIS WIFE AS WELL AS HIMSELF AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE DECIDED THAT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA SHOULD GO TO THE UNITED STATES FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED THAT HE HAD CALLED A CABINET MEETING FOR THE MORNING OF JANUARY 3 TO BRIEF HIS MINISTERS. AFTER EXPRESSING DEEP APPRECIATION FOR ALL THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAD DONE IN THIS EMERGENCY, HE THEN SPECIFICALLY ASKED THE UNITED STATES TO ASSIST IN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE MEDICAL CENTER AND IN PROVIDING THE TRANSPORTATION. UNDER SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONING, HE INDICATED THAT THE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD PAY ALL THE EXPENSES. "ALL, ALL", HE EMPHASIZED.

2. I EXPLAINED TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IT WOULD SEEM MORE MORE APPROPRIATE AND IN KEEPING WITH PAST PRACTICE IF THE PRESIDENT WENT TO EUROPE. HE COULD BE ASSURED OF THE SAME TESTING AND TREATMENT FACILITIES IN ANY NUMBER OF EUROPEAN CITIES, AND IT WOULD BE A LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN EXPLAINING HIS DEPARTURE TO THE TUNISIAN PUBLIC. THE PRIME MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT EVERYONE WAS IN AGREEMENT THAT IT SHOULD BE THE UNITED STATES; AND THAT IN EUROPE, CLOSE TO TUNISIA, HE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED IN WHAT IS GOING ON IN TUNISIA. DESPITE MY FURTHER EFFORTS, NOUIRA WOULD NOT BE DISSUADED FROM INSISTING ON THE UNITED STATES AS THE VENUE FOR PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S TESTS AND TREATMENT.

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PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
September 6, 2007

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, TUNIS 9, January 3, 1971 Control 91Q NODIS

3. ACCORDINGLY, I SAID I WOULD TRANSMIT HIS REQUEST TO WASHINGTON. HE PRESSED STRONGLY FOR ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD PERMIT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA TO DEPART ON MONDAY OR TUESDAY. I EXPLAINED THAT OVER THE LONG NEW YEAR'S WEEKEND THIS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT, BUT THAT, OF COURSE, I KNEW THE USG WOULD GIVE URGENT ATTENTION TO HIS REQUEST.

4. FOLLOWING NOUIRA'S VISIT, I TALKED WITH DOCTORS BARNES AND MAGAL. THEY CONFIRMED THAT ALL THE DOCTORS, TUNISIAN, FRENCH, SWISS, AND U.S., AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, HAD PREPARED A BRIEF, SIGNED STATEMENT IN WHICH THEY AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THE PRESIDENT NEEDED FURTHER DIAGNOSTIC EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT OUTSIDE OF TUNISIA. IN THIS BULLETIN THE DOCTORS EXPRESSED PREFERENCE FOR SUCH TESTING IN THE UNITED STATES. (DRS. BARNES AND MAGAL EMPHASIZED THAT, DESPITE THEIR TACTFUL EFFORTS, THE TUNISIANS WOULD NOT BE DISSUADED FROM THEIR DECISION THAT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA SHOULD GO TO THE UNITED STATES FOR TREATMENT.) THE DOCTORS FELT HE NEEDED A COMPLETE CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT. HOWEVER, THE DECISION ABOUT WHERE THE PRESIDENT SHOULD GO FOR THIS TREATMENT WAS SPECIFICALLY LEFT TO THE FAMILY. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD NOT WANTED BOURGUIBA TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY--HE FELT IT WOULD BE BAD FOR POLITICAL REASONS--NOR DID MRS. BOURGUIBA AT FIRST, BUT THEY ALL AGREED IN THE END, AFTER CONSULTING THE PRESIDENT A SECOND TIME, THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE THE BEST PLACE WHERE HE COULD OBTAIN THE FINEST EXPERTISE. IN THE END, THEY WERE GUIDED BY WHAT THEY FELT WAS BEST FOR THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT HAD TOLD THEM, "HE WOULD DO ANYTHING TO GET BETTER."

5. COMMENT: NOUIRA WAS ASKING URGENTLY FOR ANY ASSISTANCE WE COULD OFFER. HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY LIKE THE U.S. TO INVITE PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA TO STAY AT A VIP MEDICAL FACILITY LIKE WALTER REED, BUT HE DID NOT ASK FOR THIS DIRECTLY. HE ONLY ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE IN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE MEDICAL CENTER WHERE HE MIGHT GO, PRIVATE OR USG, AND FOR HELP IN PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION. HE INDICATED THAT HE HOPED AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE. I WAS, OF COURSE, NON-COMMITTAL WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AS TO WHAT COURSE OF ACTION THE USG WILL TAKE, BUT AGAIN ASSURED HIM THAT HIS REQUEST WOULD RECEIVE URGENT AND SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION. DR. BARNES AND DR. MAGAL STATED TO ME THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD GO TO A MEDICAL CENTER WHERE HE CAN HAVE BOTH PSYCHIATRIC AND NEUROLOGICAL CARE.

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6. THE MANNER IN WHICH WE RESPOND TO THIS REQUEST IS VERY IMPORTANT. IN MY OPINION, IT SHOULD BE QUICK, POSITIVE AND GENEROUS. I DO NOT WANT TO DWELL ON THE OBVIOUS. BOURGUIBA HAS BEEN A LONG AND FAITHFUL FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES AND HE HAS HAD A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENTS NIXON, EISENHOWER, KENNEDY AND JOHNSON. HE IS SERIOUSLY ILL. HE WANTS TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES WHERE HE FEELS HE WILL GET THE FINEST MEDICAL ATTENTION. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THERE MAY BE ULTIMATELY SOME CRITICISM OF THE U.S. IF HE FOLLOWS THE SAME COURSE AS MONGI SLIM, THERE WILL BE MUCH MORE POLITICAL FALLOUT, IF THE U.S. FAILS TO RESPOND TO THIS URGENT PLEA FOR ASSISTANCE IN A MANNER IN KEEPING WITH THE TRADITION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.

7. REQUEST DEPARTMENT PASS PARIS.

GP-1.

RELPH

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(NOT PASSED TO PARIS BY OC/T JANUARY 3, 1971)

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